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# PelhamNEWS

## Artful Celebrations



ALLAN BENNER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Six-year-old Nathan Haymes adds some paint to a sheet of plywood as part of a graffiti art demonstration presented during Culture Days celebrations at Welland Community Wellness Complex. See more on page 3.



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# LOCAL NEWS

## 'We don't know where to turn'

RAY SPITZER  
Postmedia Network

Laura Birrell and Fran McLaughlin are overcome with fear when they see the mail carrier.

They're not afraid of the person delivering packages. They're horrified by what the cost of their next hydro bill might be.

Last Wednesday, fear turned to anger.

As the Niagara Falls residents were preparing to sit down with reporters and Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath and Niagara Falls NDP MPP Wayne Gates to discuss their skyrocketing hydro bills, Birrell and McLaughlin received their latest slip.

The total: \$677. Up from the \$372 they paid last month.

"We've been able to maintain bills, but now it's at a point where we don't know what to do, we don't know where to turn," said McLaughlin.

"We work hard to maintain our home because we are proud. We spend all of our time here. We don't go on vacations. We don't live an elaborate life. We just live to pay our bills, and to be comfortable."

Birrell said they have a small, apartment-sized fridge downstairs, which they haven't used this year.

"We kept it unplugged. We had closed the vents off so the central air would focus more on the main unit where we live. We do our laundry off peak. We're trying to be responsible."

"This is my childhood home. We've entertained selling and moving out of province because the province is just going down the tubes."

They have a small outdoor pool, which they closed.

"There isn't any disposable income for us at this point. We do our best to conserve as much as we can. We try not to run the air conditioning too much, and we have switched our dryer to run on gas instead of hydro, but now even the price of gas is going up," said Birrell.

"It's putting a lot of strain on us financially, but also emotionally. We are always stressed about paying the bills."

Birrell said she went to Gates' constituency office after receiving the \$372 hydro bill. She said Gates, who has been a vocal critic of the provincial government's handling of the hydro file and who recently invited people to talk to him about their hydro bills, was "fabulous and listened with empathy."

"I'm just one I don't know how many people who are going through the same thing," said Birrell, adding they don't have children.

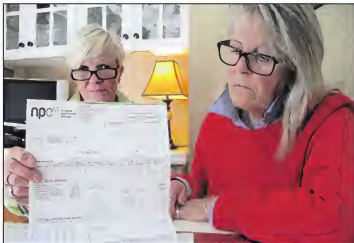
She said she went to Project Share to learn about a program that might be able to offset some of their monthly costs, but didn't feel it was enough.

Birrell said she then went to Niagara Peninsula Energy for advice.

"Hydro had said, 'You have an excellent payment history,' and I said, 'We don't want to change at this rate.'"

"So (a hydro employee) said, 'Why don't we put you on what's called an Arrears Management Program,' which would basically take that \$372 and over a 10-month period of time, and tack it on to our other bills going forward."

"Ironically enough, the



RAY SPITZER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Niagara Falls residents Laura Birrell (left) and Fran McLaughlin have seen their hydro bill triple during the past couple of years.

mail lady just left 10 minutes ago. Fran opened up our bill, and we're looking at a \$677 hydro bill now — that's with the Arrears Management Program."

Gates said he often hears stories similar to Birrell's and McLaughlin's from other constituents who have never been behind on a bill before.

"There's close to 6,000 people in my riding alone that are behind on their bill," he said.

"They don't want to go to Project Share. They don't want to go to the hydro and talk to the nice lady at the desk that's saying, 'well we can try and do a payment plan.' No, I've been able to pay my hydro bill my entire life."

Gates said when Birrell came into his office, "we both broke down because she was just so upset that she couldn't pay her bill."

"In a province as rich as Ontario, this should not happen," he said.

"It shouldn't happen to families. It shouldn't happen to young families, shouldn't happen to seniors."

He said the Liberal government is not doing enough to take the burden off ratepayers. In fact, said Gates, they are making matters worse by continuing to sell off Hydro One, "which will drive rates even further up."

Birrell said she, too, has been listening to people like

Birrell and McLaughlin, and has put forward solutions to address the immediate needs of Ontarians who are "finding it harder and harder to build a good life in our province."

She credited the Niagara Falls residents for sharing their story and putting a "face to the struggles that everybody is feeling."

Horwath said Birrell's and McLaughlin's hydro bill has tripled during the past couple of years, but instead of permanently taking the HST off hydro, the government is proposing a temporary rebate that they can't count on, and refuses to stop the sell off of Hydro One.

Horwath said the NDP had called for the immediate and permanent removal of HST

from hydro bills, and continues to push the government to stop its "wrong-headed" sell-off.

"The hydro system in this province has been systematically privatized by consecutive Conservative and Liberal governments," she said.

"We have a government that is following the same failed path as the government that came before them. When you look at Quebec, and you look at Manitoba — I call them our hook-end provinces — they are both charging rates that are less than half of what we're charging."

Horwath said the peak rates in Ontario have increased 50 per cent since Kathleen Wynne became premier in 2013.

"People are feeling like we're hitting a tipping point, like we're hitting a wall," she said.

St. Catharines Liberal MPP Jim Bradley could not be reached for comment.

Earlier last week, the government announced it will be giving hydro ratepayers a \$2.45 rebate on their bills every month by halving the purchase of \$3.8 billion in large renewable-energy projects.

Energy Minister Glenn Thiell said a new Independent Electricity System Operator report showed the province will have a steady supply for the next decade, so the change makes sense.

Tossing the toonie and change back to consumers adds up when combined with the government's recent move to slash HST from hydro bills, he said.

—with files from Postmedia Network  
rspitner@postmedia.ca

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# City celebrates its arts

ALLAN BENNER  
Postmedia Network

The pounding of drums echoed through Welland Community Wellness Complex last Saturday as more than a hundred people visited to celebrate arts and culture in the city.

Welland's arts and culture co-ordinator, Cassandra Magazzeni said the visitors were at the Lincoln Street facility to participate in the city's Culture Days celebration that featured a drum circle organized by the Perpetual Peace Project, a graffiti demonstration, a Painted Pebble Pets workshop, demonstrations of Welland Public Library's 3D printer, Sphero the Robot, and Greek and Polish delicacies.

"Everything is going well," Magazzeni said.

While the drum circle "was a big hit," she said she was also impressed with the interest in the graffiti art demonstration by local artist Chris Lagesten.

Magazzeni said she was pleased to see that all ages were trying graffiti.

"Probably the oldest person we had was 85 years old, and the youngest was probably five," she said. "It's cool to see that much of an age

gap is interested in doing graffiti."

Said Lagesten, "There were definitely much older people and young kids, too. It was right across the board."

At one point, there were so many people hoping to try their hand at graffiti art that they had difficulty finding a place to paint on the two sheets of plywood provided.

"People were squeezing in between each other," Lagesten said. "All the way across it was just jam-packed."

He said it was the first time he led the demonstration, and he didn't know what to expect.

"But to see all these people doing it was pretty cool."

The Culture Days celebration also featured free concerts on Friday by Deborah Frappier, and on Sunday by a musical group called Orchestrum.

Magazzeni said it was the fifth year Welland has joined the national Culture Days celebration.

Numerous other events took place throughout the region during the weekend.

ABenner@postmedia.com  
Twitter: @abenner1



ALLAN BENNER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Three-year-old Kenzie Phillips creates a pet rock during Culture Days events at the Welland Community Wellness Complex in Welland, Ont.

## SAVE ON ENERGY COUPON EVENT

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**Saturday Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016**

**The Home Depot** - 7190 Morrison St.  
9am - 5pm

**Saturday Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

**Canadian Tire** - 6840 McLeod Road  
9am - 5pm

**Friday Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

**Lowes** - 7355 McLeod Rd  
9am - 5pm

**Saturday Oct. 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

**Home Hardware**  
2640 Industrial Park Rd  
Smithville  
9am - 5pm

**Saturday Oct. 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016**

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## How should we spend your money in 2017?



DAVE  
AUGUSTYN

Do you have any suggestions on how the Town should spend and invest your money to improve our Town?

Council will begin our 2017 budget process with a special public meeting where we listen to you and other members of the community about what you would like to see in next year's and future budgets.

ets. That meeting will occur on Tuesday, Oct. 11 at 6:30 p.m., in the council chamber at Pelham town hall.

Pelham council first started this type of a "pre-budget consultation" ten years ago – for the 2007 Budgets. We continue each year to welcome residents, representatives of sports teams, service clubs, and committees, and businesses and property tax payers to provide input.

I'm pleased that following Council deliberations each year we have been able to follow-through on most of the suggestions offered

by your friends and neighbours. In previous years, folks have requested a dog park, a skate park, sidewalks along a number of roads, crosswalks, sidewalk snow clearing on every sidewalk in town, partnerships on service club signs, and a new community centre. Council discussed each of these requests, and most have been approved or are scheduled in future budgets.

That's why we are undertaking this consultation process again. Council and I want to hear directly from you about your needs, wants, and

ideas for our town. Our community improves when more and more people become involved in its success!

And, this is just the start of our 2017 budget discussions:

- \* Pre-Budget Consultation – beginning Oct. 11, 2016;
- \* Draft Capital Budget available to the public – Nov. 25;
- \* Draft Capital Budget presented to Committee – Nov. 28;
- \* Council consider approving Capital Budget – Dec. 5;
- \* Draft Operating Budget available to the public – Jan. 27, 2017;
- \* Draft Operating Budget

- presented to Committee – Jan. 30;
- \* Council consider approving Operating Budget – Feb. 6;
- \* Draft Water & Sewer Budgets available to the public – Feb. 17;
- \* Draft Water & Sewer Budgets presented to Committee – Feb. 20;
- \* Council consider approving Water & Sewer Budgets – March 6.

Prefer to provide written input? Simply send a letter via email to a special email address, [ourbudget@pelham.ca](mailto:ourbudget@pelham.ca). You will also soon be able to view background budget

information at the town's website: [www.pelham.ca](http://www.pelham.ca)

Not internet savvy? You can also provide written comments via normal mail c/o town clerk, town of Pelham, 20 Pelham Town Square, P.O. Box 400, Fonthill, ON L3S 1E0.

I hope to hear from you and I look forward to discussing your ideas so that we can continue to build a better future for our Town together.

You may contact Mayor Dave at [mayordave@pelham.ca](mailto:mayordave@pelham.ca) or suggest future column or read past columns at [www.pelhammayordave.blogspot.ca](http://www.pelhammayordave.blogspot.ca).

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## Restaurants offer stress-free Thanksgiving



ROSS  
MIDGLEY

"Why does the house smell like burning plastic?" Somehow, without laughing, the advice to the caller was to be to 'unwrap' the turkey first – no lie.

Even the cooks who have their Thanksgiving food preparations nailed down cannot foresee every potential pitfall.

I recall vividly one Thanksgiving at my in-laws (wine, yes, but not due to the meal prep stress). I had roasted the perfect turkey. Mahogany. Gorgeous. Resting for the requisite time to ensure even redistribution of the natural juices before carving. I thought I had pushed the waiting roast far enough back on the counter, only to return to the kitchen to find my masterpiece half-eaten by Rasta, my sister-in-law's Portuguese water dog.

It turns out Rasta was both nimble and careful, having first devoured the dark meat most coveted in our family. I had grown up experiencing other Thanksgiving mis-



FILE PHOTO

Thanksgiving, like so many traditions that involve food and family, can have its share of laughter and of tears.

Most people I know can relate stories of Thanksgivings gone awfully awry – some that can be laughed off, others that can not.

The pressure of pulling off the perfect meal, resplendent with all of the trimmings can have even the most seasoned cook hitting the Chardonnay early in the day. And one piece of professional advice here, that choice rarely makes for a better meal.

Large turkey producers like Butterfield even have a hotline that people can call for advice on cooking their bird. The most asked question?

fires, too.

My mother, who really had no time for the kitchen and cooking, nonetheless pulled off beautiful meals on the holidays. I grew up in a family of six and my mom would distribute the jobs among us, in order to shorten her time behind the stove.

My dad was always left with the job of whipping the potatoes and carving the bird. When the hour arrived to do the carving, however,

my dad's pager would sound and he would be off to the hospital, leaving me to hack at the turkey. The frequency of this occurrence left us all a little suspicious, and caused me to approach turkey differently.

Now every Thanksgiving, whether I am preparing a meal for my family or for guests at the restaurant, I do-bone it first and wrap it around stuffing as a 'roulade'. The turkey stays beau-

tifully moist this way, and everyone gets a little mix of white and dark meat so there are no squabbles at the table. Best of all, anyone can be left to carve without any skill needed at all.

Many families today are eschewing these logistical struggles of Thanksgiving meal preparation by booking their holiday feast at a restaurant.

Gone are the hours spent in the kitchen, with some-

time inconsistent results, the dishes to do, the cunning pets. Thanksgiving can be easy and stress-free. And as a chef running a restaurant I can tell you I will be giving thanks for your reservation.

Ross Midgley moved from P.E.I. to Niagara in 1999. Since then he has held the head position in several of the region's top kitchens. He is passionate about his family, all things Niagara and good rock 'n' roll. He can be reached at [chefrsmidgley1968@gmail.com](mailto:chefrsmidgley1968@gmail.com).

# 'The guy came through the fence'

ALLAN BENNER  
Postmedia Network

They didn't believe her, at first.

The story the seven-year-old told her parents last Tuesday seemed too incredible to be true, especially without a letter from her school, DeWitt Carter in Port Colborne, confirming it.

"I said: 'OK Jess, what are you making up?'" Linda Estey said. "Why isn't there a note? What's going on?"

Certainly, she thought, parents would be informed if a child had apparently been assaulted by a man who entered the playground while children were outside for morning recess.

And certainly, parents of the five children who were right there when it happened "have a right to know," she added.

Estey said her daughter returned home from school Sept. 27 and described watching helplessly as a man grabbed the arm of another child.

"The guy came through the fence, approached the girl and said something along the lines of, 'Come with me,'" Estey said.

The girl apparently replied: "No, I don't know you."

Estey said her daughter and all the children in the area "just stopped and froze," watching in disbelief.

Then the man allegedly grabbed the girl by the arm.

"She yelled at him: 'What are you doing? Let go.' By that time, (the school) staff were right there," Estey said.

She said school staff "did an amazing job" bringing the man into the school and keeping him there until Nia-

gara Regional Police arrived to arrest him.

She later learned the suspect was charged with assault of a person under the age of 16.

But at the time and with no confirmation from the school, Estey said all she could do was spend the night wondering and worrying.

"I was a mess Tuesday night, because I didn't know. Is this true? Who was this guy? Is it a father? Who is it?"

She said she called the school the next morning and her fears were confirmed. The story her daughter told her was true.

Estey said staff told her they wanted to inform parents immediately, especially those of the five children who were directly involved. She said she was told District School Board of Niagara's communications department prevented school faculty from doing so.

But in an interview, DSBN spokesman Brett Sweeney said "that's not the case."

He said the parents of the child directly involved were notified immediately, and visited the school that afternoon to speak with faculty.

"They were given all the details of what could be shared by the school," he said.

Sweeney said the school board defers to police when it's an active investigation.

"Because this was a police investigation, we do take our lead from the NRP," he said.

"If they feel that there's a need for community notification, then they'll issue a media release, and we always pass that on to parents."

He said "it's tough, sometimes, to know exactly who is in the area and who might have witnessed it," and it's dif-

ficult to compile a list of students who might have been involved.

"Our staff member who intervened when this individual came onto the school property — obviously, their attention is entirely focused on intervening in that situation and protecting the safety of students. Sometimes it's not always possible to have a list of who was in the near vicinity or might have witnessed it."

See FENCE on A12



Linda Estey stands at an opening in the fence at DeWitt Carter School in Port Colborne, where a man is alleged to have entered the schoolyard and assaulted a student last week.

ALLAN BENNER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK



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# LOCAL NEWS

## Cruise in control at Niagara Music Awards

JOHN LAW  
Postmedia Network

They've been in a theatre, a tent, an arena and a bar, but last Tuesday the Niagara Music Awards went to church.

The crowd sat in pews as the region's annual celebration of music moved to the former Lundy's Lane United Church, which is in talks to be a new Niagara Falls arts hub.

"We want to do it in new venues, we want to challenge ourselves," Niagara Music Awards co-organizer Todd Brown said. "We want to grow."

About 300 people attended the event, which handed out more than 20 awards and offered 10 performances.

The night was dominated by Cory Cruise, who won four awards including for male vocalist and country artist of the year. The Thorold singer-songwriter has been one of the region's busiest performers since winning a Niagara's Next Star competition in Welland four years ago.

"It's been extremely hard work, but the community support has been amazing," he said. "I can't mention it enough."

He said the awards play an important part in the region's music scene.

"It's a celebration bringing a community of music together, and a night to hear stuff—because you're playing so much—you might not get a chance to hear."

The scene certainly impressed Ridge-way producer Thomas (Tavgs) Salter who received the Special Achievement Award.

"The level of talent is incredible," he said after sitting through last Tuesday's awards.



Chelsea Crites and Cory Cruise perform at the Niagara Music Awards held at Battfield Centre (United Church) in Niagara Falls.

Salter has written and produced for Josh Groban, Chantal Kreviazuk, Lights and Walk Off the Earth, and he played extensively in Niagara's bar scene 20 years ago.

Host Jim Fannon, doing the show for the third straight year, said his "passion" for local music keeps him coming back.

"It's vital to keep a bit of momentum going, and celebrate their successes," he said. "I don't think we need another

awards show in Niagara, but I think this is really important. This is an arts and culture award, it's not businesses giving trophies to their friends."

As always, the show was a loose, lively affair with friends and family cheering on nominees. Performance highlights included a duet of Picture with Cruise and country singer Chelsea Crites, a stirring acoustic piece by Paige Kopp, and a funky jam by The Bryan

former church into a dance hall.

The night's other multiple winners were Avenue Inn with three and The Maysides with two.

It was also a night decades in the making for folk artist of the year Ron Hurs.

"Every teenager, when he turns 55, wants to record a song," he said. "So that's what I did."

jun@postmedia.com

## WINNERS OF THE 9TH ANNUAL NIAGARA MUSIC AWARDS

- Album of the year:** The Jay Diem Band  
**Original song of the year:** Kevin Teng  
**Engineer of the year:** Jay Baty  
**Folk artist of the year:** Ron Hurs  
**Instrumentalist of the year:** Kevin Richard Holle  
**Producer of the year:** Rabby Teng  
**New group of the year:** Saviour the Moment  
**Adult contemporary artist of the year:** Cory Cruise  
**Female vocalist of the year:** Chloé Rabideau  
**Male vocalist of the year:** Cory Cruise  
**Country artist of the year:** Cory Cruise  
**New artist of the year:** The Maysides  
**Progressive rock artist of the year:** Avenue Inn  
**EDM artist of the year:** Glass Apple Bonzai  
**Heavy metal artist of the year:** Dorian Gray  
**Punk group of the year:** The Maysides  
**Hip hop artist of the year:** J.O.S.H.  
**Music video of the year:** Mel Monaco  
**Best bar band:** Off the Record  
**Songwriter of the year:** Theatre Crisp  
**Rock Group of the year:** Avenue Inn  
**Original group of the year:** Avenue Inn  
**People's Choice Award:** Cory Cruise  
**Special Achievement Award:** Thomas Salter  
**Community Recognition Award:** Keith Bellamy

## HOLLYWOOD STYLE SPANISH COLONIAL EXECUTIVE MANOR!! This Home As Seen & Featured on the T.V. Show "Buying The View" Ep. # 9



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Public Skating	Adult Public Skating	Adult Learn to Skate	Adult/Preschool Skate	Mens's Shiny Hockey	Women's Shiny Hockey	Women's Learn to Play Hockey	Adult Skills Hour	Pelham Panthers Home Games
Sunday, Oct 9 1:00-2:00pm Tuesday, Oct 11 7:30-8:30pm Friday, Oct 7 8:00-9:30pm	Thursday, Oct 6 1:00-2:00pm	ARENA CLOSED THANKSGIVING MONDAY No Learn-to-Skate Oct 10	Friday, Oct 7 10:00-11:00am Tuesday, Oct 11 1:00-2:00pm	Friday, Oct 7 9:00-10:00am Tuesday, Oct 11 8:00-9:00am	Thursday, Oct 6 10:30-11:45am ARENA CLOSED THANKSGIVING MONDAY No Shiny Oct 10	Thursday, Oct 6 9:30-10:30am	Thurs, Oct 6 2:00-3:00pm ARENA CLOSED THANKSGIVING MONDAY No Hockey Oct 10	No home games this week  Next Game: Friday, Oct 14

## It's Never too Late... to Learn to Skate!

Adults of any age can start skating with this program which is geared towards learning or improving on the basics of skating.

Participants will be introduced to various skills involving moving forward and backward, gliding, stopping, turning and developing endurance.

If you are interested in building your fundamentals or just want to learn to skate recreationally, Adult Learn to Skate is for YOU!

CLASSES RUN FROM SEPTEMBER 26, 2016

UNTIL

NOVEMBER 28, 2016



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Wednesday, October 12, 2016 3:00 pm until 6:00 pm  
Pelham Town Hall (20 Pelham Town Square, Fonthill)

### Engineering Design Criteria Open House

Meet with Engineering staff, managers and the director to provide input about the draft Engineering Design Criteria.

Review the draft document at:

- pelham.ca/have-your-say
- Pelham Town Hall (Monday-Friday, 8:30 am until 4:30pm)

For more information, contact Public Works at 905-892-2607 ext. 332.

Review the draft document | Ask questions | Provide feedback



### PELHAM FIRE PREVENTION WEEK EVENTS



- **Thurs, Oct 6<sup>th</sup> - Fire Safety at the Market** (Pelham Farmer's Market, 4:30-7pm.) Join Sparky the Fire Safety Dog to explore a fire truck, meet firefighters, learn smoke alarm safety and receive great giveaways.
- **Tues, Oct 11<sup>th</sup> - Door-to-Door Smoke & CO Alarm Checks** throughout Town from 8:00-7:30pm.
- **Sat, Oct 15<sup>th</sup> - FREE Community BBQ** (Fonthill Giant Tiger parking lot, 11:00am-1:00pm.) All are welcome. Pelham Firefighters will grill a delicious BBQ and discuss smoke alarm safety. Donations will be accepted for Pelham Cares. Food and refreshments generously provided by Fonthill Giant Tiger and Pelham Fire Services.

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For more information, contact Corporate Services at 905-892-2607 ext. 348

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For more details, contact 905-892-2607 ext. 320 or visit [pelham.ca/psac](http://pelham.ca/psac).

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# LOCAL NEWS



**Susan Crane, of Niagara Falls, says it's unfair a U.S. airline refused to grant her an extension on her travel vouchers.**

## Airline leaves woman angry

**ALISON LANGLEY**  
Postmedia Network

A Niagara Falls woman says she was left frustrated and angry after an airline refused to extend her travel voucher after she was diagnosed with cancer and unable to take her scheduled flight.

"What happened was not fair and I think it is wrong," Susan Crane said.

In March 2015, Crane was scheduled to fly from Buffalo to Missouri on Southwest Airlines when she encountered a woman desperate to get a seat on the same plane.

"She was crying and upset. So, I got off and gave her my seat. I don't begrudge getting off that plane."

Crane, who travels frequently to Missouri via Southwest, was given \$751 in travel vouchers from the U.S. carrier.

The vouchers had to be used within 12 months.

In September 2015, Crane was diagnosed with an aortic aneurysm and doctors advised her not to fly.

She contacted the airline, headquartered in Dallas, and was granted an extension.

After her doctors gave her the green light to fly again, she booked two weeks off work in July for a much-needed vacation. She planned to use her vouchers, which expired in early September, to cover the cost of the flight.

A trip to the doctor, however, abruptly cancelled her travel plans.

"On July 6, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I wasn't going anywhere."

She underwent a double mastectomy in August, less than two weeks before the vouchers were set to expire.

"I called (Southwest) and they said there would be no refund or extension. They said there was nothing they could do for me."

But, all might not be lost. After Crane shared her story with Postmedia Network, she received a phone call from a Southwest representative who told her the airline would like to work with her to resolve the situation.

In an email to Postmedia Network, a company spokeswoman said the representative who made the decision not to extend the voucher a second time was following the established

“

I called (Southwest) and they said there would be no refund or extension. They said there was nothing they could do for me."

Susan Crane

policy.

According to the airline's website, "validity of (vouchers) will not be extended and any unused value will be forfeited upon expiration."

"But, due to the extenuating medical circumstances, someone from our customer relations team will reach out and work with Ms. Crane on the exception," Lisa Tiller said in the email.

Crane was told to provide a letter from a physician confirming her medical condition prevented her from flying.

"The lady I talked to didn't think she would be able to provide another extension but we'll wait and see," Crane said.

While acknowledges it went against the airline's policy when they granted her an extension the first time, she feels the corporation should offer a second extension due to her unexpected health issues.

"I didn't ask for an aneurysm," she said. "I didn't ask for breast cancer."

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# LOCAL NEWS

## Services grow for exploited women

CHERYL CLOCK  
Postmedia Network

When a victim of human trafficking asks for help in Niagara, she will likely find services that are disconnected, and not tailored to her specific needs.

While intentions are good, organizations can lack the knowledge or tools to help women stay free from the sexual exploitation that has dominated their lives, and to eventually heal themselves, says Krystal Snider, skills development co-ordinator at YWCA Niagara Region.

She is working to change that.

The YWCA, in partnership with the Niagara Sexual Assault Centre, has received a \$25,000 grant from the Canadian Women's Foundation to develop an anti-human trafficking action plan for Niagara.

The goal is to make it easier for victims to access a multitude of supports seamlessly,

she says.

Services need to be better coordinated, so that everyone else is doing. And gaps need to be identified, she says.

Work begins with a forum in November, that will bring together every group and person in the region who works with victims. Think Niagara Regional Police, Victim Services Niagara, the Niagara Health System, and more.

One unknown that needs to be better understood, is the pervasiveness of trafficking in the region, she says. It's known that Niagara is a hotspot, due to the variety of strip clubs and massage parlours and its proximity to the U.S.

In Canada, most trafficking is domestic, typically in a corridor that includes Niagara, Hamilton, Toronto, Windsor and Montreal, she says.

Not all sex trade workers are victims of human trafficking, and it does not always involve

moving women across provinces, she says.

Instead, what distinguishes the two is exploitation. Trafficked victims are oppressed by typically male pimps who control everything in the woman's life — their money, the frequency of jobs, Johns, type of sex acts the women are forced to perform — usually under the threat of physical violence and psychological domination, she says.

"Victims of trafficking have experienced a tremendous amount of trauma," says Snider. "Women might be forced to see 12 men a day. What does that do to your psychologically? And what does that do to your physical body?"

Their needs are complex. It takes an average of seven attempts for her to leave a trafficking, she says.

Women are recruited using methods that are both insidious and deviously psychological, often leaving women thinking

it's their own choice, she says.

"A woman might have a pimp who is like a Romeo, who befriends you and becomes your boyfriend," says Snider. "Someone you really, really care about."

Eventually, the conversation deviates into a suggestion that the women might consider seeing a client "so we can have some more money," says Snider.

"She's feeling like she chose to do that," she says.

"They feel like this is their boyfriend, and this is their choice."

They don't understand that had they refused, the outcome would likely have been violence, she says.

"Over a period of time, it gets more violent, and women are psychologically beat down by traffickers."

Women become dependant and vulnerable. They believe the lies told by the traffickers: no one else loves you, you

don't have anywhere else to go, your women friends will be harmed if you leave.

"Women feel like they can't leave," says Snider.

Other times, women recruit other women.

On occasion, women have entered the YWCA's emergency shelter to entice female residents with nice clothes and promises of money. "I know this guy. He'll hook you up with some clients," they might say. Victims recruiting victims.

Shelter staff are trained to recognize this covert head-hunting and stop it immediately, she says.

An action plan will encompass every possible entry point, places where a victim would ask for help.

The ability to accurately identify them as trafficked victims is essential. If a woman doesn't realize what's happening to her, she could be misidentified as a victim of

domestic violence, and then offered services that don't meet her needs and further isolate her, says Snider.

She leads a YWCA drop-in program called Sex Trade on My Terms which gives women a safe, weekly refuge. Many sex trade workers who have attended the program report being trafficked at some point in their lives, says Snider. Often women are finally dropped by traffickers when they become too old, or their addictions become so severe they are not marketable, she says.

Victims also need a quick response, not wait lists for counselling, and long-term programs instead of services that end before a woman feels safe enough to share her experiences, she says.

"Our goal is if a victim enters at any part of the system, we will know how to respond."

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Krystal Snider, skills development co-ordinator is photographed in front of the YWCA building on King Street in St. Catharines.

JULIE JOSSAC/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

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# Playground fence opening a cause for discussion

FENCE from A5

Estey said that finally on Friday, a note was sent home informing parents about the incident.

Sweeney said the board waited until police issued a media release Thursday night before following up with the letter, including the information provided in the media release, while informing parents counsellors would be available for students who might have been emotionally impacted.

"If they're feeling fearful or anxious, we certainly want to provide support to them."

But Estey said her daughter could have benefited from counselling immediately afterward — not four days later.

"This was stuff that my daughter needed on Tuesday," she said.

Although Estey said she's relieved no one was hurt, she remains troubled about the delay in informing parents, and conceded it was allowed to happen at all.

And, she wants changes made so it can never happen again.

For instance, she said, the suspect apparently entered the schoolyard through an opening at the southeast corner of the fenced-off property, off Davis Street.

A tree growing beside that opening is easily large enough to hide someone, and she wants a gate added to ensure the safety of students.

Sweeney said the opening in the fence "is set back in the yard, and students when they're out on their nutrition break don't play anywhere near that area, because then it would make for difficult sight lines for staff to maintain supervision."

"I know there have been some discussions about that (opening) over time, but I don't know exactly how long," he said. "We haven't had a request for a gate, but that's something that we'll look into as a possibility."

Sweeney said the fence opening also serves as an exit for students and staff if the building needs to be evacuated.

"Being able to get out in the event of an emergency is important, so we want to look at all the factors associated," he said. "We don't want to create a problem where students aren't able to evacuate if necessary. But obviously safety is very important, so that's something we will look at."

Dave Schaubel, DSBN trustee for Fort Erie and Port Colborne, said "the safety of the kids is certainly the No. 1 priority, so I can't imagine that that would be a difficulty."

While he has not looked into the feasibility of installing a gate, he said he's "certainly in favour of anything we can do to make the playground safer for our kids."



**They were given all the details of what could be shared by the school. Because this was a police investigation, we do take our lead from the NRP."**

DSBN spokesman Brett Sweeney

Despite using that area for emergency evacuation, Schaubel said "I can imagine there would be ways around that."

"If it's a safety issue, (the school board) will take care of it."

The police statement indicated the same man suspected in the incident at DeWitt Carter was also accused of assaulting a woman in the area of Bell and Davis streets nearly a week earlier, on Sept. 21.

Police have not identified the woman, who was walking her five-year-old child to the school on that Wednesday morning.

Estey maintains if the suspect had been arrested then, the alleged assault at the school likely would not have happened.

NRP Const. Phil Gavin, however, said it was the incident at the school that provided the evidence police needed to lay charges for the earlier sexual assault.

Gavin said police continued investigating the alleged sexual assault until the second incident occurred at the school, and the suspect was arrested at the scene.

"The further investigation by sexual assault unit was able to positively identify the male as being involved in the first incident," he said in an e-mail.

Sweeney said the school did issue a letter to parents following the alleged sexual assault on Sept. 21.

"A letter went home that day on the 21st. It's a fairly simple letter that says we've had a report of an incident in front of our school," he said.

The letter said police are investigating, "and if based on their investigation they feel there's need for greater community notification, they will provide that information and we will send it along to parents."

John Farrell, 47, of Port Colborne was charged with sexual assault related to the Sept. 21 incident, as well as assault of a person under the age of 16, related to the Sept. 27 incident.

He remains in custody pending a bail hearing this Friday in St. Catharines.

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# LOCAL NEWS

## Niagara still hunting for physicians

**BILL SAWCHUK**  
Postmedia Network

Niagara Region wants its staff to keep working to recruit and retain family physicians for another year.

Its public health and social services committee last Tuesday voted to recommend to council to continue the program that tries to address a chronic shortage of doctors in the area.

It's a problem that threatens to get worse as the population grows and ages.

To make matters worse, more than 40 family physicians in Niagara are over the age of 65, when retirement becomes an increasingly attractive option.

"I think it is work that is important to do", Dr. Valerie Jaeger, Niagara's medical officer of health, said. "It is up to council to decide if it is work we want to fund."

The program costs taxpayers \$113,000, a report to the committee said. Every municipality in Niagara is on the provincial high-needs list for family physicians, the committee heard.

From January to September, 11 full-time family doctors set up shop in the region as well as five who took on short-term contracts. A total of 14 physicians have retired, closed their practice or relo-



GETTY IMAGES

cated outside Niagara in that same time.

Jaeger said maintaining a healthy roster of family doctors in Niagara is complicated because retiring physicians often leave practices of 3,000 to 4,000 patients.

New, younger doctors — because of a number of factors including lifestyle — want practices in the 1,500 to 2,000 patient range.

The recruiter often must find two young family doctors to replace one retiring

physician.

While many of Niagara's municipalities have a person on staff designated to deal with physician recruitment in addition to many other duties, only St. Catharines has its own part-time recruiter.

Pelham Mayor Dave Augustyn expressed his support for the program. He said the Region is working to attract new residents, and "one big check box is, 'Can I get a family doctor?'"

The program operates in collaboration with the municipalities to promote Niagara as a destination of choice to prospective family physicians.

It was renewed for three years in 2011 with two one-year options.

Since 2011, 54 physicians have come to Niagara and 48 have retired or moved. Over the past nine months, the program has generated 60 leads, and there are 17 clinic vacancies that have been identified.

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**2012:** 5 new physicians; 3 physicians out of practice; 258 family physicians in Niagara; 55 needed.

**2013:** 11 new physicians; 12 physicians out of practice; 257 family physicians in Niagara; 56 needed.

**2014:** 9 new physicians; 5 physicians out of practice; 261 family physicians in Niagara; 52 needed.

**2015:** 12 new physicians; 13 physicians out of practice; 260 family physicians in Niagara; 53 needed.

**2016:** 11 new physicians; 14 physicians out of practice; 257 family physicians in Niagara; 56 needed.



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Just \$2,500  
Includes a Granite Slab  
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**Glenmount Memorials**  
905-735-9717  
301 Aqueduct Street  
Welland

May the stars carry your sadness away,  
May the flowers fill your heart with beauty,  
May hope forever wipe away your tears,  
And, above all, may silence make you strong.

Chief Dan George



# COMMISSO'S FRESH FOODS

Open Sunday October 9th 8:00am-5:00pm  
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Organic Turkeys  
Also Available!

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**Fresh Young  
Turkeys**  
Available in all sizes

**199** <sup>/lb</sup>  
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Premium Capless  
Aged 28 Days  
Certified Black Angus  
**Prime Rib  
Oven Roast**

**899** <sup>/lb</sup>  
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Fresh Ontario Pork  
**Crown Rack  
of Pork Roast**

**499** <sup>/lb</sup>  
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Fresh Ocean Spray  
**Cranberries**  
Product of Canada

**2/5**  
12oz bag



Alexander & Horning  
**Spiral Smoked  
Ham**

**299** <sup>/lb</sup>  
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Fresh  
**Broccoli Crowns**  
Product of Canada

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*Better value, no waste!*

*High in fiber & vitamins!*



Sale prices in effect Friday Oct. 7 through Oct. 13, 2016

FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU
7	8	9	10	11	12	13

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